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Viewing cable 08USNATO314, RUSSIA THROWS ITS WEIGHT AROUND IN THE EAPC

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Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08USNATO314	2008-09-02 17:12	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL//NOFORN	Mission USNATO

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.aftenposten.no/spesial/wikileaksdokumenter/article4026848.ece>

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RUEHNO/USDELMC BRUSSELS BE IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/USNMR SHAPE BE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 000314

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/01/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [NATO](#) [MOPS](#) [PREF](#) [GG](#) [RU](#) [UP](#) [SP](#) [BO](#) [SR](#)
SUBJECT: RUSSIA THROWS ITS WEIGHT AROUND IN THE EAPC

Classified By: A/DCM W.S.Reid
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The EAPCs first meeting after the summer break featured Georgian protests about Russian action and a Russian response made memorable by a claim that, if the Russian response had been proportionate, "Tbilisi would now lie in ruins." Russia announced it has withdrawn from the PfP SOFA. The Russian delegate followed the meeting by making hallway threats to the Georgian political counselor. Spain moved beyond Germany to become the Ally most sympathetic to Russian versions of the August conflict. End Summary.

ALLIES MOSTLY QUIET AS GEORGIA AND RUSSIA TRADE ALLEGATIONS

¶2. (C) Recent events in Georgia dominated the September 2nd meeting of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC). Meeting at the working level, EAPC representatives heard updates from both Finland and France on the ongoing efforts of the OSCE and the EU, respectively, to respond to the crisis in Georgia.

¶3. (C) Georgia highlighted its long-term commitment to a peaceful conflict resolution policy solution, asserting that August saw a provocation prepared well in advance by the Russian side. The Georgian delegate briefed on the numbers of Russian troops inside Georgia, highlighted the humanitarian cost of the conflict, and concluded from Russias recognition of the separatist regions that Russia does not respect fundamental principles of international law.

¶4. (C) In reply to these "lies from Georgia," the Russian representative claimed that his country had tried to find peace in Georgia for twenty years and had only changed its approach in response to an unprovoked attack from Georgia. He agreed that Russia had used disproportionate force, arguing that had proportionate force been used, "Tbilisi would now lie in ruins." The Russian rejected the Georgian estimate of 130,000 persons displaced by the conflict and said that Russia had provided for humanitarian access. The delegate said Russia had halted hostilities and was in compliance with the "Medvedev-Sarkozy" six-point plan, alleged that Georgian forces had still not returned to barracks, that Russian forces were manning the buffer zones in preparation for the arrival of OSCE observers, and that Russia stands ready to play a part in the peacekeeping effort.

¶5. (C) Latvia, the Czech Republic, and Estonia all made very short pre-coordinated remarks recalling NATO and EU statements. Ukraine highlighted Kyivs support for Georgias territorial integrity and sovereignty.

¶6. (C) Poloff, after expressing regret that violence had been used, noted that the United States has not drawn the conclusion that the Georgian action was unprovoked and that further investigations remain warranted. He noted an apparent failure by Russian peacekeepers to keep the peace in the days leading up to the conflict, and marveled at the speed of the Russian "response." Poloff noted that Russia remains in breach of the 6-point plan (including its clarifications) and emphasized that Russia should not portray the ceasefire deal as something concluded between just the EU and Russia. Georgia was also a party to the agreement. Poloff referenced President Bushs condemnation of the Russian recognition of the separatist areas, its inconsistency with multiple UN Security Council Resolutions, and drew EAPC members attention to the NATO ministers conclusion that the Alliance is considering seriously the implications of Russia,s actions for the NATO-Russia

relationship.

¶7. (C) The Spanish representative, making the only statement in the meeting that attributed equal blame to Russia and Georgia, noted recent multilateral statements on the issue and called on "all sides" to commit again to a peaceful future. He said that what had occurred in the past was not the most important matter, the issue was how we deal with each other in the future. The Spaniard hoped that all sides would fulfill the 6-point plan with "restraint."

¶8. (C) Attendance in the EAPC may have reflected shifting realities over the summer. Belarus made the first appearance in months, while Russias best EAPC friend, Serbia, failed to show up. Uzbekistan was also absent.

RUSSIA ANNOUNCES IT HAS SUSPENDED THE PFP SOFA

¶9. (C) Under another agenda item the Chairman briefed EAPC members that Russias ratification of the Partnership for Peace Status of Forces Agreement (PfP) had been accompanied by several "understandings." The Chair noted that some Allied legal experts had concluded that these do constitute reservations to the agreement, and it remained the sovereign right of any signatory of the SOFA to take also a stand and formally qualify them as reservations. He indicated that the NATO Legal Advisor will provide nations with a memo to explain the situation and encouraged them to take any action by the deadline of 14 September.

¶10. (C) The Russian delegate, in response, said Russia considers these statements to be clarifications and not reservations of a specific nature. He then announced that Russia has suspended the implementation of the NATO SOFA in Russia (Note: We understand that in order to take this step, Russia must provide the United States - as the depositary state - with written notification, something it has not yet done. End note)

COMMENT: RUSSIANS MAKE PERSONAL THREATS,
ENGAGE SPANISH FRIENDS

¶11. (C/NF) Cold War imperialism appears to have returned to the conduct of Russian diplomacy. According to the Georgian mission, Russian First Counselor Victor Kochukov approached the Georgian Political Counselor and a member of the Lithuanian diplomatic staff in the hall after the meeting. The Georgian said the Russian issued the following threat: "You should think about this. Think about this making a statement, young man. You should think about your home. We will not allow you. Be aware. We will not allow you."

¶12. (C/NF) The Spanish intervention was a glaring exception to the attempt by Allies to preserve unity in the face of Russia. As the EAPC ended the Spanish representative then approached the Russian delegate to engage him in conversation. There he could be seen by all nodding intently while the Russian waved his hands making forceful points. The Belgian representative soon joined the group. While debate rages at NATO about the appropriateness of NRC meetings, the EAPC meeting of Ambassadors scheduled for September 10 will be a test case of how the Allies will conduct themselves when Russia is in the room. Silence from most of the Allies is not a strong position. We also doubt the divergence of opinion within the Alliance has been lost on EAPC members who must continue to chart their own response to the Georgia crisis.

VOLKER